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ABSTRACT

Sixteen women enrolled in Arts and Science departmental honors and ten women eligible, but not enrolled in the honors program, were given the Omnibus Personality Inventory, Form F, and a short questionnaire to determine if there were differences in personality traits between the two groups. No significant differences were found on a t-test to compare raw score means, though a possible tendency toward a difference was reflected on characteristics reflecting an intellectual, independent-thinking profile. (Author/AF)

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A COMPARISON OF PERSONALITY TRAITS OF FEMALE HONORS AND NON-HONORS STUDENTS

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Sixteen women enrolled in Arts and Science departmental honors and ten women eligible but not enrolled were given the Omnibus Personality Inventory, Form F, and a short questionnaire. No significant differences were found on a t-test to compare raw score means, though a possible tendency toward difference was reflected on characteristics reflecting an intellectual, independent-thinking profile. This could provide a starting point for more research with a significant N.

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Attention has recently been called to the fact that many women do not finish a baccalaureate program. There has been concern that the proportion of advanced degrees received by women has steadily declined since the 1930's.

If research techniques could determine what kinds of women tend to seek special programs and independence of scholarship and thinking, early identification might more readily utilize the talent among women.

As the cost of higher education continues to rise, there will be more demands to justify expenditures of funds for special programs, such as honors programs. Initial screening would more eoonomically utilize resources and time for both students and institutions. Grades may not be the total story, though little else is currently used in recruitment or selection.

The problem investigated was whether there were differences in personality traits between female undergraduates who sought baccalaureate degrees with departmental honors and those who did not.

Differences other than academic in two groups of freshmen were scrutinized by Demos and Weijold (1966). Half of the qualified freshmen in a California institution selected the option to participate in a General Honors program and half did not.

Significant higher mean scores were received by the Honors Group on California Psychological Inventory subtests of Responsibility, Achievement via Independence, and Intellectual Efficiency scales. The Refused Honors Group received a higher mean score on Socialization. The general personality pattern of the acceptors was categorized by the authors as "perfectionist," responsible, conscientious, and efficient. Those refusing were termed "strategists," socially conforming, also conscientious and capable, but with little desire for independent achievement or intellectual efficiency.

Gottsdanker (1968) explored differences of the upper ten percent of an entering freshman class and a random sample of the rest of the class. Omnibus Personality Inventory results showed that the able group scored significantly higher on scales related to intellectual commitment, abstraction interests, and desire for independent thought (Complexity, Autonomy, Estheticism, Theoretical Orientation, Thinking Introversion, Schizoid Functioning, Lack of Anxiety, and Repression -Suppression.)

However, when the groups were compared by sexes, it was found that the two groups of men had almost parallel scores except for the Non-Authoritarianism where the honors group was higher. The honors women received significantly higher standard scores in almost all categories than both male groups in Complexity and Non-Authoritariansim.

Baker (1966) found that honors students tended to perceive greater strength on Aspiration Level, Student

Dignity, Self-Expression, Group Life and Play-Work scales as compared with non-honors students as measured by Stern's College Characteristics Index.

He also observed that the election of an honors program generally indicated a strong need to learn in addition to intellectual recognition.

A comparative study of high and average women achievers at the University of Illinois found that high achievers were self-confident, independent, purposive, had rapport with faculty, and seemed to possess broad socio-cultural awareness. Simmons (1967) also found that average women focused on non-academic, social activities.

Kell[illegible] and Kennedy (1966) studied freshman home economics students, both honors and non-honors. The honors girls were less concerned with social and group pressures and placed less value on economic security. They scored lower on the economic and political power scales of the Allport Vernon Lindzey Scale of Values and higher on aesthetics. However, none of these differences were present in a followup conducted three years later.

Metzger, et. al (1969) examined the life roles of former women students, honors and non-honors, and found definite differences. Honors girls planned to work during more stages of the family life cycle. They more frequently planned to upgrade their occupational level in the future. More often, they planned to earn advanced degrees.

Method

Subjects

All thirty women students enrolled in departmental honors in the University of Missouri-Columbia College of Arts and Sciences were invited by letter to participate in a research project designed to gain information about the traits of high-achieving upper division women; sixteen responded. An equal number of non-honors women, matched with regard to major, race, SCAT scores and grade point were also asked to participate; ten non-honors women responded.

Procedure

The subjects were given the Omnibus Personality Inventory, Form F, and a short questionnaire, reproduced in the appendix, in a group in a classroom setting during the early evening hours. Two retest invitations were issued to those who did not appear.

A t-test was performed comparing the two subgroups, and raw score means for the subgroups and the total groups were obtained.

Results

The profile for each of the subgroups and the total group is shown in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

The standard scores varied between 64 and 39, with

no extreme variation by either subgroup. Scores below the standard score of 50 were received by both groups on SE, PO, and MF.

A low SE-scoring (Social Extroversion) person is described as not socially extroverted, working better alone, and preferring to work alone.

A low PO score (Practical Outlook) indicates a preference for ideas over facts, with a liking for philosophical problems.

Low MF (Masculinity-Feminity) scorers like drama, sculpture, and painting as opposed to chemistry, physics, or math.

The non-honors group of ten had slightly below mean scores on TO and RB categories.

Thinking Orientation (TO) low scorers do not like reading math or science articles or long kinds of mathematical operations.

A low Response Bias (RB) score may indicate a restlessness and an inability to concentrate on a problem for a long period of time.

In all of these cases the mean score was only slightly below the mean of the norm group, which consisted of 7283 freshmen at 37 institutions.

The highest standard score was on the Autonomy (Au) category, which would indicate the concept that civil disobedience is sometimes justified. The high Au scorer would probably tend to be less rigid in outlook.

Both groups scored higher than the mean on TI, Es, CO,

RO, IE, PI, AL, and Am scales. Neither group obtained a standard score higher than 60, so there may be only a tendency to the traits listed below.

High TI (Thinking Introversion) people enjoy thought-provoking lectures and thinking about information in a new way.

A high Es (Estheticism) score could indicate a high level of sensitivity to esthetic stimulation.

Those who score high on CO (Complexity) like to take on new ideas and projects without having to know the outcome in advance.

A high RO (Religious Orientation) have a liberal outlook toward religion and are more likely to be skeptical or agnostic.

High IE (Impluse Expression) people act out or feel like acting out their impulses.

Personal Integration (PI) high scorers do not respond affirmatively to psychotic or neurotic statements about themselves, i.e. they appear to be "welladjusted."

AL(Anxiety Level) is constructed so that a high score indicates a lack of anxiety feelings, not nervous or tense.

A high Am (Altruism) score indicates a person who trusts others and deals ethically with them.

The N's were too small to determine if there were any significant differences between the means of the two groups. However, the results are presented in Table I.

Insert Table I about here.

The t-statistics were also presented in Table I. The level of significance was not reached for most of the categories. On the TI, TO, Es, MR, and RB categories, at least .50 level of significance was reached. Taking into account the factor of a very small N, there may be a slight indication of difference here which could be explored by further research.

Mean age was 22 for the honors group and 21 years for the non-honors. The total group mean was 22 years.

The size of high school graduating class had a mean of 381 for the honors group, 317 for the non-honors, and 360 for the total group.

Discussion

Because of the small N on which this research was based, no strong conclusions can be made. However, the total group with an N of 26 could reflect a personality profile of women with high grade point averages.

There appear to be few differences between this group of upper-division women and the freshman norm group of mixed sex. A trend could be noted to a liberalized approach in attitudes toward recognized authority and organized religion.

The lower SE score fits into Demos and Weijola's (1966) finding that non-honors students had a higher score on socialization. High achievers may enjoy activitis of a different type. Simmon's research (1967) also showed in an all-female study that average women concentrate on social life more.

trate on social life more.

Many of these findings support Gottsdanker's (1968) work wherein able students scored higher on scales showing preference for independence, intellectual commitment and abstract ideas.

The difference between honors and non-honors women in Thinking Introversion may be an area which further research could substantiate or dispel. The extra work of an honors paper or thesis may be the element which deters some women from completing honors work. If a person truly enjoys tackling a problem and learning more about it, he might be more inclined to become involved in an honors project. Thus, there may be a motivational question remaining. It is possible that various personality traits are linked to motivational levels and a measure of one could indicate a measure of the other.

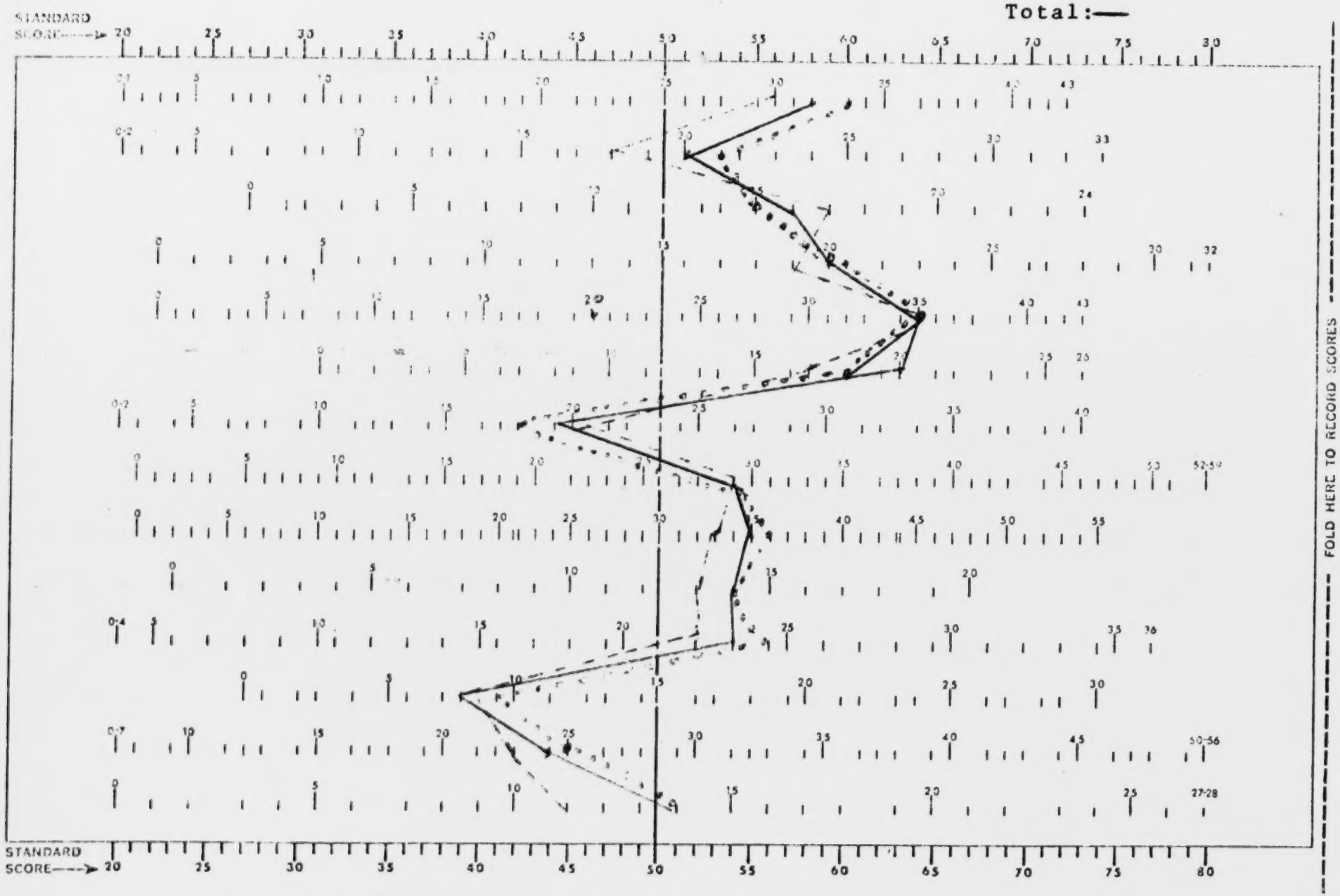
There are many areas still not controlled for. This research did not measure the part which many other factors may play in the toal picutre. Exposure to special programs in high school or other schools may be influential. Family responsibility and finances or lack of them may make a difference.

This project probably has its biggest value in the fact that some data on high-grade-point women was amassed. Some areas of difference may be present, but the N is too small to make any but the most tenuous kinds of statements.

Honors:

Nonhonors:

Total:



Note. — Scores below 20 are plotted as 20; scores above 80 are plotted as 80.

Figure 1. Profiles of Honors, Nonhonors and Total Group on Omnibus Personality Inventory, Form F.

Table I. Mean Raw Scores and t-test Results of Honors, Non-Honors, and Total Group On Omnibus Personality Inventory, Form F.

OPI Category.	TI	TO	Es	CO	Au	RO	SE	IE	PI	AL	Am	PPO	MF	RB	Size Grad. Class	Age
Total Group Mean Raw Score N=26	31.6	20.2	15.8	19.8	34.8	17.9	18.7	28.7	35.0	13.6	23.1	8.4	24.1	12.6	360	22
Honors Group Mean Raw Score N=16	32.8	21.3	15.1	20.3	34.8	18.4	18.2	28.5	36.2	13.8	23.5	8.8	24.8	13.6	381	22
Non-Honors Group Mean Raw Score N=10	29.8	18.2	17.0	19.1	34.8	17.3	19.4	29.0	33.3	13.3	22.4	7.8	23.0	10.9	317	21
t-statistic	1.13	2.23	1.11	0.51	0.01	0.54	0.39	0.12	0.61	0.24	0.38	0.61	0.89	1.53	0.63	0.94
Level of significance	.50	.05	.50	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	.50	.50	NS	.50

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Appendix

Sample of questionnaire:

HONORS COLLEGE RESEARCH

Name_____Age_____Class_____

Married?_____If so, when?_____Major_____

Are you working on departmental honors?_____

Size of high school graduating class_____Are you a

transfer?_____If so, from where?_____